



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

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- 2. Training deadline for confinement site manure applicators**

CARROLL COUNTY FISH KILLS SHOW THE COSTS OF MANURE RELEASES

DNR also responding to complaint of manure in Elk Run Creek

CARROLL — The DNR investigation into what caused a fish kill along Brushy Creek in southwest Carroll County remains ongoing, but it is strikingly similar to a fish kill in November 2004 along Elk Run Creek in northern Carroll County. The DNR is also responding on Thursday afternoon to new complaints of manure in Elk Run Creek.

Manure releases led to the 2004 Elk Run Creek fish kill, which killed about 90 percent of fish in the stream. The watersheds, or areas that drain into the creeks, are similar in a number of ways. Both have similar topography, both have high bacteria levels and both connect to the Raccoon River, a drinking water source for the Des Moines area. Both also have large numbers of small cattle open feedlots, which appear to be the source of the manure in both fish kills.

“The size of the facility doesn’t matter. Producers statewide need to be aware that small facilities can pollute too,” said Dan Stipe, supervisor of the DNR field office in Atlantic.

Beyond the environmental damages, costs to the producers choosing to discharge manure can be great as well.

The DNR is currently pursuing legal action against two open feedlots in the Elk Run Creek watershed and is considering similar legal action in the Brushy Creek watershed. The administrative orders dealing with Elk Run Creek both carry an \$8,000 penalty and

require the landowner to make improvements to their operations to prevent future manure releases. Both orders are currently under appeal.

“Producers need to evaluate the risk,” said Gene Tinker, coordinator of the DNR animal feeding section. “Without proper controls and management, there’s the risk of hurting water quality and violating state regulations. Or they can prevent spills from happening in the first place through good management and by installing and properly maintaining manure controls.”

Producers that do nothing and allow manure to discharge to a stream face the additional risk that they may be required to have an operating permit, which requires more manure controls, nutrient management plans, and ongoing monitoring and reporting, Tinker added. It is a violation of state law when manure reaches Iowa water.

The DNR is currently investigating about 10 to 12 possible sources of manure in the Brushy Creek watershed. It appears that the manure ran over the ground and into the creek, most likely from small cattle open feedlots. While the exact reasons for manure reaching the creek are still being investigated, it’s possible that manure controls failed, allowing leaks to reach the creek. The DNR is currently waiting for results of lab samples from Brushy Creek.

The Brushy Creek investigation began Friday evening after a complaint about manure discharging into the creek was reported to the DNR. The fish kill was discovered Monday morning. The DNR will continue to investigate both Brushy Creek and Elk Run Creek.

“Reporting a manure spill or fish kill to the DNR as soon as you see it is critical,” said Matt Rhodes, an environmental specialist with the DNR field office in Atlantic. “With quick reporting, we may have the opportunity to stop the release and reduce potential damage. Details that can help us locate the incident quickly are also appreciated.”

Anyone with information regarding the manure releases or fish kill should contact the DNR Atlantic field office at (712) 243-1934.

For more information, contact Dan Stipe at (712) 250-8643 or Matt Rhodes at (712) 250-0217.

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TRAINING DEADLINE FOR CONFINEMENT SITE MANURE APPLICATORS

DES MOINES – The almost 600 confinement site manure applicators who have not yet completed their 2005 annual training can still try to schedule a training session before the end of the year, according to the DNR.

“Many of these applicators may have actually completed the training, but not sent in the application form and the \$25 educational fee,” said Carol Arpy of the DNR licensing

section. “If that’s the case, they should send the form and fees in soon so that we can give them credit for their educational hours.”

Those who have missed the training have until Dec. 31 to complete it. Local Extension offices offer a two-hour video training session, but may have limited hours and staffing due to the holidays. That makes it even more important for applicators to call the Extension office and schedule the training in advance.

Those who do not complete three annual training sessions will have to take a make-up exam to qualify for renewing their certificates, said Arpy.

Applicators who have questions about their training status should call Arpy at (515) 281-6581. The DNR has sent letters this week to those who have missed training sessions.

Iowa has 2,154 certified confinement site manure applicators. They are certified for a three-year period ending on Dec. 31 of the third year. Applicators have until March 1 to renew their certificate. After March 1, they cannot legally apply manure until they renew their certificate and pay a \$12.50 late fee.

For more information, contact Jeff Prier at (712) 262-4177.